

TEACHERS' READING COURSE.

The Teachers' Reading Course is conducted by a committee of the Woman's Association for the Improvement of Schools. For full particulars as to cost, books, etc., address, Miss ADA V. WOMBLE, Secretary Raleigh, N. C.

Announcement.

Several of the books and booklets of the Teachers' Reading Course have already been received by Messrs. Alfred Williams & Co. The other numbers have been ordered, and the complete set will be sent to subscribers to the Reading Course as soon as possible upon the receipt of the price—one dollar.

The first book that will be discussed is "The Discovery of America," by Washington Irving.

The selection of this particular book as the first in the course seems very fitting since October, the month of discovery is at hand, and since, also, at this time many students in our schools are beginning the study of United States History, elementary or advanced.

On the fifth page of the book a note informs one that "this volume contains a condensed account of the first voyage of Columbus, in Irving's own words. The condensation has been possible by a simple and judicious elementation of details unimportant to the narrative."

A careful comparison of this condensed volume and the fuller account will convince one that the condensation has been most happily effected throughout the first twelve chapters. Upon the opening of the thirteenth chapter the connection is somewhat broken at that point, but the omission will be supplied.

In studying the book, the following very simple outline may be helpful:

- I. The life of Columbus before his first voyage. (Chap. 1—9.)
- II. The voyage and the discovery of land. (Chap. 10—12.)
- III. Exploration of the new land. (Chap. 13.)
- IV. The return to Spain. (Chap. 14.)

THE LIFE OF COLUMBUS PRIOR TO HIS FIRST VOYAGE.

Notice the following leading points:

1. Prince Henry of Portugal had tried to find a way to Asia by the south of Africa.
2. Columbus conceived a bolder plan to reach Asia by sailing west.
3. It was largely for the purposes of trade that both wished to find another way to Asia. Columbus was inflamed with missionary zeal also.
4. The circumstances of Columbus' life had conspired to arouse in him a passion for geography and navigation.
5. He offered his services as an explorer to Portugal without success.
6. After years of delay, the Spanish sovereigns sent him out.
7. More than eighteen years passed between the announcement of his design and his fulfillment of it.

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBJECT MATTER.

Besides collecting and reducing to a system "all that was known relative to geography and history," Prince

Henry brought the compass into general use and persuaded three learned men to try to make an instrument by which sailors could tell their distance from the equator. "The result of their labors was the application of the astrolable to navigation enabling the seaman, by the altitude of the sun, to ascertain his distance from the equator." This instrument has since become the modern quadrant.

When a little child says, as he sometimes does, that Columbus sailed west to discover America, the teacher, doubtless, recognizes the truth of Mr. Fiske's remark that "in order to understand what the great mariners of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were trying to do, and what people supposed them to have done, one must begin by banishing the modern map from one's mind."

If the history book lacks a map of the world as the ancients thought of it, or as Columbus believed it to be, the teacher might make a copy, crude, if necessary, of Ptolemy's map of the world, or of the globe of Martin Behem who had probably seen a copy of Tascanelli's chart. These maps may be found in the larger histories.

It is interesting to recount the various influences that made possible the daring project of Columbus. Perhaps the most important influence was caused by the perusal of Marco Polo's book on Asia. The notice in the text is so slight that I quote from Mr. Fiske and compile from the appendix to the "Discovery" of Irving:

"The book of Sir Marco Polo concerning the 'Kingdoms and Marvels of the East,' is one of the most famous and most important books of the middle ages. It contributed more new facts toward a knowledge of the earth's surface than any other book that had ever been written before. Its author was 'the first traveler to trace a route across the whole longitude of Asia; the first to describe China in its vastness, with its immense cities, its manufacturers and wealth, and to tell, whether from personal experience or direct hearsay, of Thibet and Burmah, of Siam and Cochin China, of the Indian Archipelago, with its islands of spices, of Java and Sumatra, and of the savages of Andaman. He knew of Japan and the woful defeat of the Mongols there, when they tried to invade the island kingdom in 1281. . . . To the northward from Persia he described the country of the Golden Horde, whose khans were holding Russia in subjection; and he had gathered some information concerning Siberia."

After a residence of seventeen years at the court of the Grand Khan, the great potentate of eastern Asia, Marco Polo returned to his native city of Venice about the year 1290. In order to quicken the tardy recollection of his relatives and friends, he prepared a banquet to which he invited them. Upon the arrival of the guests, the Polos—Marco, his father, and his uncle—received them, dressed in oriental garments of crimson satin. During the progress of

the feast, these garments were exchanged for others of crimson damask, and the latter, presently, gave place to crimson velvet. Finally, the hosts appeared in the ordinary Venetian costume, having given their rich robes to the servants. The sordid garments in which they had traveled then being produced, the seams and the linings were ripped open and treasures of precious stones were displayed to the gaze of the astonished Venetians.

It is no wonder that Marco Polo's accounts of the countries where such wealth had been acquired should have excited the desires of Columbus to see for himself such a country. On his voyage he frequently quotes Polo's book, and he confidently expects to find the islands and the mainland described in it.

This column, as has been previously explained, is intended to be the means of communication between the members of the Reading Circle and Secretary. Questions will be cheerfully answered.

The names of reference books will be given in this column, together with the names of the publishers and the price, when such information can be obtained.

The experiment of South Carolina's Department of Immigration with the 250 Scandinavian families who are to be settled on 10,000 acres of land in Lexington County, will be watched with interest. If they make good citizens, good managers, and industrious laborers, then South Carolina will be better off. But if they prove to be the contrary, then that State will be poorer; for, as the Raleigh Times so well points out, poor labor is an impoverishment, not a help. This movement also suggests another thought: what in the world do people want to rush so many folks into the South and fill it up and run it over all at once for? In a few short years our children and our children's children will be well able to occupy the land. Why work all these immigration schemes, only to leave crowded posterity a sardine's heritage? Land owners in the South have a good thing for a long time to come if they only knew it.—Gastonia Gazette.

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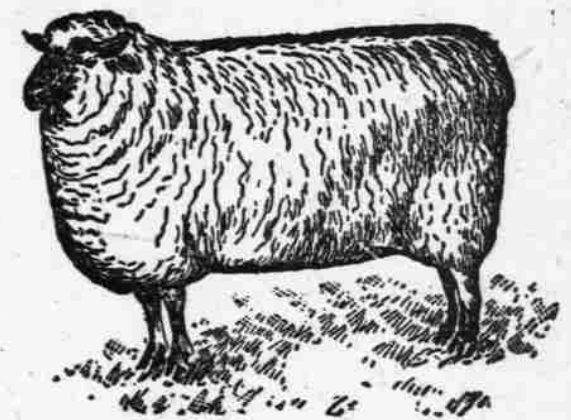
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